

Kunz family goes out of way for reunion

By Carolyn Monson
Lifestyle Writer

Kunz family members have earned the reputation for going out of their way to make a reunion a successful get-together.

Thirty-five Kunzes from Utah and Idaho traveled all the way to Bern, Switzerland, for the event.

As the descendants of John Kunz II deplaned Thursday at Salt Lake International Airport, still more Kunz family was on hand to greet them.

Placards and banners greeted the family members on their return from a 15-day trip to Bern, the ancestral Kunz home.

Waving Swiss flags, carrying souvenirs ranging in size from too big to pocket size, the weary travelers were home to tell of their "summit" meeting with relatives from Russia, Switzerland as well as the U. S.

It was John Kunz II and III who first came to the U. S., in June, 1872, settling in Idaho. The Kunz father and son founded Bern, Idaho, named for their homeland.

With the arrival of the two, cheese making skills, learned in the first Bern, were brought to this area.

Immigrated to Russia

At about the same time the father and son came to the U. S., two other brothers immigrated to Russia. The Russian Kunzes left Russia forever just prior to the beginning of World War II.

Forty descendants of the Russian family, 90 descendants of the Swiss family that stayed behind when other brothers left their home, and the 35 U. S. family members met at a mountain lodge above Diemtig Canyon near Bern.

It was the Swiss press which dubbed the reunion a summit conference between the USA and the USSR.

June B. Black acted as family historian and record keeper for the big event which took over a year to plan.

Mrs. Black, Murray, said her mother was a Kunz.

George Kunz was tour organizer. He had made the trip to Bern a year before and made the necessary contacts there to assure the reunion possibility.

The U. S. Kunzes toured the home of the family's founding father and all stayed together in a Swiss chalet, once a private home and now a hotel.

Swiss family members presented the U. S. family with a magnificent brass cowbell. George Kunz had the task of hand-carrying the bell with its embroidered yoke.

Mrs. Black said it will be placed in a museum in Bern, Idaho, a Kunz family project for the future.

Kunz Descendant

Dr. Martin Josei, chancellor of Bern, and also a Kunz descendant, presented each member of the U. S. family with an illustrated book about Bern.

The 35 U. S. Kunzes had tourist sites practically to themselves.

They were a busload. They took over the entire hotel, and represented a large section of the airplane that carried them all from Chicago.

It was a glorious trip, said Mrs. Black, but the family is ready for a rest.

"We haven't had more than three hours sleep in 48 hours," she said.

But they began with 35 eager Kunz family members and returned with just 34.

One family member couldn't resist staying on — at least a little longer.